

Vacancies – First published April 2016

Headline figures are presented for vacancies which have been notified to JobCentres / Jobs & Benefits Offices (J&BO) of the Department for Communities (DfC). A small proportion of vacancies notified are based in the UK mainland or in the Republic of Ireland. The statistics do not represent the total unsatisfied demand for staff by employers, but are only those vacant positions notified by employers to DfC.

There were 51,753 vacancies notified in the 2015/16 financial year, a decrease of 5% when compared against the 2014/15 financial year.

Table 3: Monthly Notified Vacancies, 2015/16

Financial Year 2015/16	Notified Vacancies (1)			Total
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Casual	
Apr-15	2,417	1,404	383	4,204
May-15	2,344	1,458	370	4,172
Jun-15	2,359	1,549	423	4,331
Jul-15	2,113	1,272	358	3,743
Aug-15	2,252	1,436	395	4,083
Sep-15	2,692	1,975	460	5,127
Oct-15	2,561	1,946	476	4,983
Nov-15	2,415	1,658	434	4,507
Dec-15	1,494	837	182	2,513
Jan-16	2,445	1,585	497	4,527
Feb-16	2,601	1,667	390	4,658
Mar-16	2,803	1,653	449	4,905
Total	28,496	18,440	4,817	51,753

Figures in the above table are not National Statistics.

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(1) Monthly notified vacancies are all new vacancy positions notified and added to JobCentres / Jobs & Benefits Offices of the Department for Employment and Learning. Notified is subdivided by financial years which run from 1st April to 31st March. All statistics are derived from data extracted from the Department for Communities Client Management System (CMS) on 6th May 2016.

(2) Vacancies data is published quarterly and reported by financial year. Data for April-June will be published on 27th July 2016.

Further statistics are available on the DfC website: [DfC Statistics](#)

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Economic inactivity

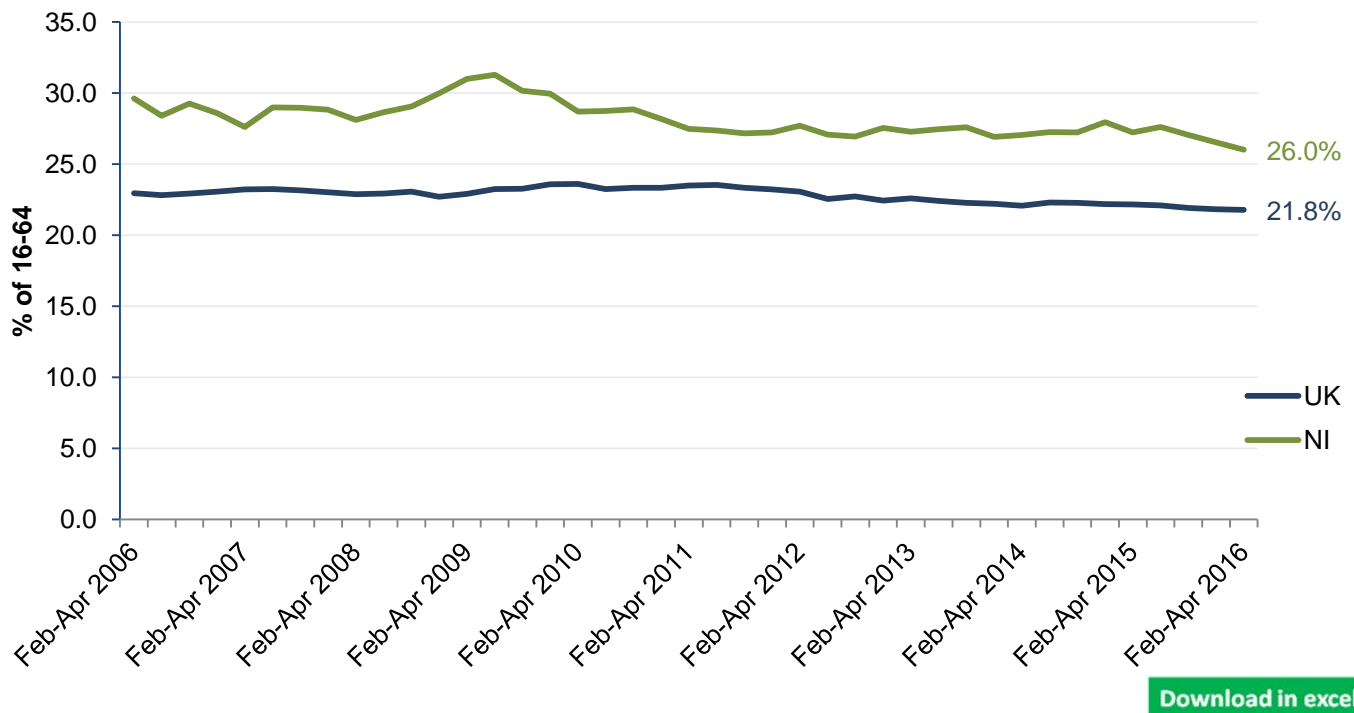
LFS economic inactivity

Economically inactive: people who are neither in employment nor unemployed on the ILO measure. This group includes all those who are looking after a home, long term sick or disabled, students and retired.

Key Findings

- NI economic inactivity rate was the lowest since the series began in 1995.
- NI economic inactivity highest of the twelve UK regions
- Of the 16-64 economically inactive, 18% wanted to work

Figure 10: Seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rates (16-64), Feb-Apr 2006 to Feb-Apr 2016



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Figure 10 shows that over the last 10 years the NI economic inactivity rate was consistently higher than the UK.

Economically inactive

The seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rate (16-64) for February - April 2016 was estimated at 26.0%, which was the lowest rate since the series began in 1995 and showed:

- a decrease of 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and
- a decrease of 1.2 percentage points over the year.

The number of economically inactive persons (16-64) was estimated at 304,000, which was:

- a decrease of 6,000 over the quarter
- a decrease of 14,000 over the year.

Of the economically inactive:

- 38% (116,000) were male and 62% (188,000) were female

Figures unadjusted for seasonality show that, of the economically inactive:

- 82% did not want a job while 18% did
- 29% were long-term sick / disabled, 27% were students, 24% were looking after the family / home, 10% were retired and 10% cited an 'other' reason for inactivity.

Regional comparison

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stood at 26.0%. This was:

- significantly higher than the UK average rate (21.8%)
- the highest of the twelve UK regions.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website:

[LFS economic inactivity](#)

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Earnings

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) – First published November 2015

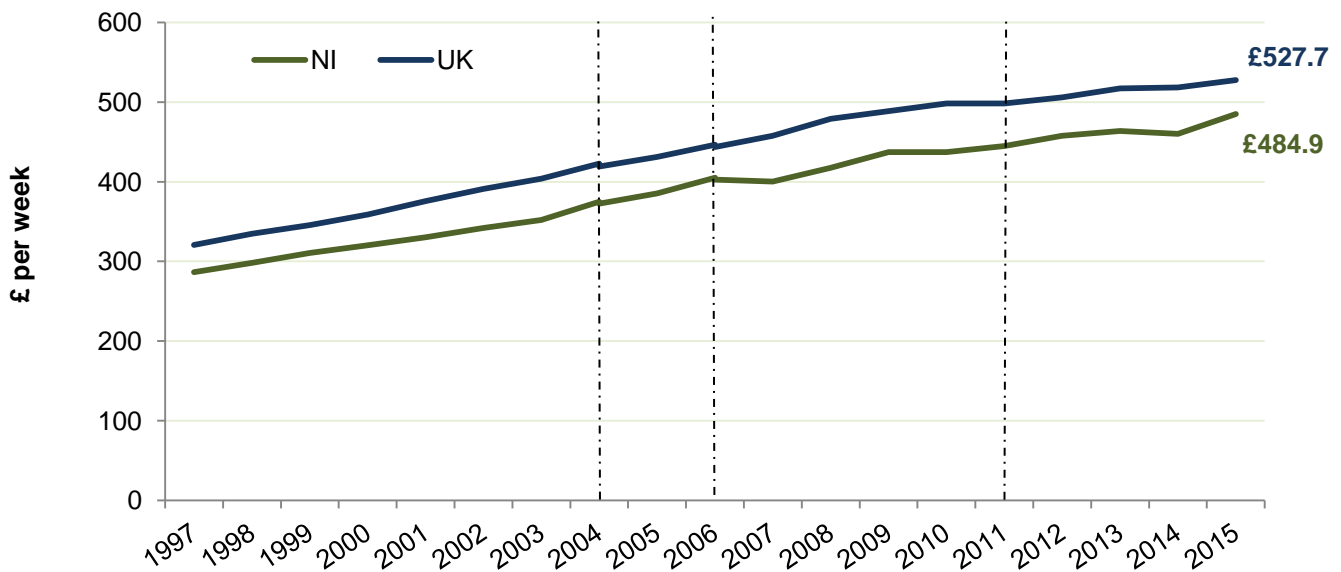
ASHE provides information on employees' hourly, weekly and annual earnings by gender, work pattern, industry and occupation. It has been designed by the Office for National Statistics and is carried out in Northern Ireland by NISRA statisticians.

Median earnings: Both median and mean results are reported by ASHE. The mean is the arithmetic average while the median is the value below which 50 per cent of employees fall. The median is often preferred for skewed data such as earnings as it is influenced less by extreme values.

Key Findings

- Median weekly earnings for all employees in NI at April 2015 were up from 2014
- Full-time and part-time weekly earnings in NI increased over the year
- The percentage increases in NI were larger than in the UK

Figure 11: Median gross weekly earning for full-time employees, 1997 - 2015



* dashed vertical lines represent discontinuities caused by methodology changes.

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Earnings

Figure 11 shows that for almost 20 years the median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in NI has consistently been below the UK average. Results for 2015 showed that:

- median gross weekly earnings for all employees increased by 5.3% over the year to £383, compared to an increase of 1.9% in the UK to £426.
- over the year to April 2015, median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees increased by 5.4% to £485, representing a return to growth after a fall of 0.8% in 2014. This was the largest annual percentage increase in earnings since 2004 and the first increase in inflation adjusted earnings since 2009.
- part-time weekly earnings increased by 5.4% since 2014, to £163.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)

LFS unemployment

The definition of unemployment used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is in accordance with that of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO unemployed includes those without a job who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

Unemployment rate - the percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

Please note that it is possible for the number of unemployed to increase and the unemployment rate to fall during the same period, as the latter measure is a ratio e.g. if the number of economically active has increased at a faster rate than the number unemployed, the unemployment rate will fall.

LFS employment

The definition of ILO employed applies to anyone (aged 16 or over) who has done at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview, or has a job they are temporarily away from (e.g. on holiday). Also included are people who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported employment training schemes.

The ILO measures are particularly useful for examining short term and long term trends over time and key LFS time series data are available both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted.

Sampling variability

The LFS is a sample survey, and as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples each would give a different result. The ranges shown for the LFS data in the table overleaf represent 95% confidence intervals i.e. we would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. These confidence intervals have been calculated using data that is not seasonally adjusted, with the relevant sampling errors produced then applied to the seasonally adjusted data.

If the 'annual change' for an estimate has increased or decreased by more than the 'sampling variability of the change', this change would be statistically significant. The annual changes for the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were tested for statistical significance. The results showed that none of the annual changes, for February - April 2016, were statistically significant over the year, i.e. the recorded change did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and was not likely to reflect a real change.

Table 4: Sampling variability of labour market estimates, February - April 2016

	Reference period	Estimate	Sampling variability of estimate	Change over quarter	Sampling variability of quarterly change	Change over year	Sampling variability of annual change
Unemployment ¹	Feb-Apr 2016	51,000	+/-11,000	-2,000	+/-11,000	-2,000	+/-15,000
Employment ²	Feb-Apr 2016	841,000	+/-26,000	8,000	+/-19,000	18,000	+/-33,000
Economically inactive ²	Feb-Apr 2016	560,000	+/-23,000	-4,000	+/-17,000	-7,000	+/-30,000
Unemployment rate ¹	Feb-Apr 2016	5.8%	+/-1.2pps	-0.2pps	+/-1.3pps	-0.4pps	+/-1.7pps
Employment rate ²	Feb-Apr 2016	69.6%	+/-1.9pps	0.7pps	+/-1.4pps	1.5pps	+/-2.4pps
Economic inactivity rate ²	Feb-Apr 2016	26.0%	+/-1.8pps	-0.5pps	+/-1.3pps	-1.2pps	+/-2.3pps

¹ People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate = total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.

² Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64).

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Please see attached link for further LFS notes and definitions:

[Labour Force Survey Background Information](#)

LFS Comparisons

Estimates of employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity are derived from the LFS, a survey of households. The most robust estimates of short-term movements in these estimates are obtained by comparing the estimates over rolling three month periods. For example the 3 months ending April 2016 should be compared with the estimates for November - January 2016, which were first published on 16th March 2016. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for January – March 2016. This is because the February and March data are included within both estimates, so effectively observed differences are those between the individual months of January 2016 and April 2016. The LFS is sampled such that it is representative of the NI population over a three month period, not for single month periods.

Seasonal adjustment

All estimates discussed in this Statistical Bulletin are seasonally adjusted except where otherwise stated. Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year; for example school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. In order to compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

LFS revisions

LFS microdata have recently been revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The revisions affect LFS data from the period May - July 2012 onwards and were first published in May 2016. The magnitude of the revisions are relatively small, with the revisions to the unemployment rate falling within +/- 0.1 percentage points and the working age employment rate within +/- 0.2 percentage points. The procedures being applied to the NI LFS results are consistent with those applied by the Office for National Statistics to other UK regions.

More information on the revision policy concerning labour market statistics can be found through the link below:

[Labour market statistics revisions policy](#)

Definition of 'working age'

The 'working age' definition, used in the calculation of employment and economic inactivity rates, was changed in August 2010 to include those aged from 16 to 64 for both men and women. Previously these rates were based on upper age limits of 59 for women and 64 for men, reflecting the state pension ages in the UK.

Claimant count definition

Claimant count figures are derived from records of claimants held at Jobs and Benefits Offices. The term 'claimants' in the claimant count is used to include those who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits. The figures include severely disabled claimants, but exclude students seeking vacation work and the temporarily stopped. The claimant count is a very up-to-date measure of those eligible to claim a specific unemployment related benefit and data are available for a range of geographical sub-regions (e.g. District Council Areas, Parliamentary Constituency Areas, Travel-to-Work Areas and Wards). It also provides seasonally adjusted and unadjusted data and as a result is a useful measure for examining both short-term and long-term trends.

Seasonally adjusted claimant count figures are provisional when published and subject to revision, mainly the following month and are only available at NI level. Seasonally adjusted totals are subject to an annual update, which revises back for 3 years (usually May) to take account of latest assessment trends. The most recent revision took place on 17th June 2015. The magnitudes of the revisions are relatively small, with the change of the monthly total claimants within +/- 0.8%. For further information see: [Claimant Count Revisions](#)

Universal Credit

In November 2010 the government announced plans to reform the welfare system by creating a new Universal Credit (UC). The new benefit replaces many of the current separate welfare benefits, as well as subsuming in-work support currently administered through tax credits. Among those benefits being replaced is the means-tested element of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) which makes up a significant proportion of the monthly claimant count.

From 17 June 2015, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) replaced the claimant count based on JSA for Great Britain (GB) with an experimental claimant count based on JSA claimants and a measure of out-of-work claimants of UC. As the roll-out of UC in GB proceeds, the undercount arising from continuing to use only JSA data increases and its usefulness decreases as a measure of the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits. As a result the Statistics Authority assessed the designation of the claimant count and decided to withdraw National Statistics designation. The full correspondence between ONS and the Statistics Authority can be accessed at the links below:

[Letter from National Statistician to UK Statistics Authority, 9 June 2015](#)

[Reply from UK Statistics Authority to National Statistician, 10 June 2015](#)

As UC has not been introduced in NI this issue does not arise for the NI series. However it does apply to comparisons between the NI claimant count series and the new GB measure based on Jobseeker's Allowance and out of work UC recipients. ONS have indicated that the new and old claimant counts are not identical since the definition of out-of-work for UC does not precisely match the claimant count definition (since it includes economically inactive claimants i.e. those not seeking and/or not available for work). However ONS analysis has shown that any bias in the new experimental measure is now less than the bias in the old series.

Redundancy Legal Requirements

Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Companies who propose less than 20 redundancies are not included in the statistics.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Please note, changes in NI earnings over the year and relative to the UK can be influenced by a range of factors including the timing of pay settlements, the extent of overtime, and differences in the composition of the workforce. As ASHE is a sample survey, results are also subject to an associated level of sampling variability. Further information is available at:

[Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)

[ASHE Background Information](#)

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) Revisions

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided to the Department by employers. The December 2015 seasonally adjusted estimate first published in March 2016 has subsequently been revised up (0.1%). For further details of QES revisions please see link below:

[QES Background Information](#)

For further information:

AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT WITH ASSOCIATED HYPERLINKS IS AVAILABLE ON THE [NISRA – ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS WEBSITE](#)

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